

Getting Your Child Ready for School

Six actions parents can take to help keep their children away from drugs

- **Establish and Maintain Good Communication With Your Child:** The more you know about your child, the easier it will be to guide her toward more positive, skill-enhancing activities and friendships. Establishing a close relationship with your child now will make it easier for her to come to you when she has a problem.
- **Get Involved in Your Child's Life:** Participate in your child's activities (bring water for the soccer team, volunteer in your child's classroom, attend a recital or play, help with a science project) and praise his accomplishments. Your participation and encouragement tell your child that these activities are worthwhile and will help him identify and pursue other positive activities as he gets older.
- **Make Clear Rules and Enforce Them With Consistency and Appropriate Consequences:** Making rules, explaining the need for them and consistently enforcing them is important. If you let your child know up front that you don't approve of using alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs, your child is less likely to use those substances.
- **Be a Positive Role Model:** Children like to imitate adults. Avoid actions that say, "Do as I say, not as I do." A parent or caregiver abusing alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs may increase a child's chances of using, using early and becoming dependent on a substance.
- **Help Your Child Deal With the Need for Peer Acceptance:** Children want others to like them. Youth say wanting to be accepted, wanting to belong and wanting to be noticed are very powerful influences. In other words, youth drug use often stems more from the need for peer acceptance rather than the inability to "just say no" to peers.
- **Monitor Your Child's Activities:** Keeping a careful eye on your child's activities is an important deterrent to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use. One study found that children who had the least monitoring initiated drug use at earlier ages. Establish relationships with your child's friends and their parents, and when your child goes out, make sure you know where he's going, whom he will be with and what he will be doing.

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Keeping Youth Drug Free

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